

**POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**  
**SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY**  
**ASSESSMENT VERIFICATION PERIOD (AVP) POLICY**

**Approved by PGME Committee:** December 16, 2020

**Approved by ECSC:** January 8, 2021

**Date of Next Scheduled Review:** 2024

### **Preamble**

The Assessment Verification Period (AVP) is a period of assessment that all International Medical Graduates (IMGs) must successfully complete prior to entering residency training in Ontario. An assessment period is a legislative requirement under regulation 865/93 of the Medicine Act, 1991. An IMG is a candidate who graduated from a non-LCME/CACMs medical school.

The AVP provides an opportunity for the Program Director to assess the candidate's knowledge, clinical skills, judgment, and communication skills, appropriate for supervised practice in the chosen discipline, and to ensure that the candidate displays an appropriately professional attitude.

The candidate may be assigned to several rotations during the assessment period.

### **Purpose**

This policy sets out the requirements for AVP supervision and assessment, and the Appeal process in the event of an unsatisfactory assessment or suspension.

### **Policy References**

- [Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine \(COFM\) 2016 Assessment Verification Period \(AVP\) Policy](#)

### **Supervision**

The AVP assessment must take place within an appropriate supervised clinical activity appropriate to the specialty.

The certificate granted for the AVP states that the candidate may practice medicine “*under a level of supervision that is determined to be appropriate for the holder and the program of medical education and assessment, by a member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario designated by the director of the program.*”

Residents completing an AVP are not authorized to write orders independently for a minimum of two weeks into the AVP; program directors are required to complete a form after two weeks from Medical Affairs which will authorize residents to write orders.

## Assessment

Assessment of AVP candidates follows the [COFM AVP Policy](#).

Program Directors must ensure that candidates are evaluated and given written feedback on a regular basis during the AVP. Assessments and meetings should be well documented and should include an initial evaluation at the end of the 2nd week, a mid-rotation evaluation by the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> week, and a final evaluation at week 12.

If a candidate is successful, after the 12-week AVP the final assessment is completed by the Program Director on the AVP form and forwarded to the PGME Office for authorization. If a candidate is unsuccessful after the 12-week AVP, the AVP form will be forwarded to CPSO for further review.

Candidates who are successful in the AVP will continue in the postgraduate training program. The AVP period counts toward residency training.

## Licensure Extension

- Application for a 6-week extension of the AVP can be made to the CPSO if remediation is required (without Registration Committee referral) to allow for adequate assessment of the candidate. A letter from the Program Director is required confirming the reasons for the extension and how any weaknesses identified will be addressed. The Postgraduate Dean must support the request to CPSO.
- An additional 6-week period can be requested. This must be approved by the CPSO Registration Committee.

## Vacation

The AVP is a high stakes assessment over a short time frame. Vacation time during the AVP is discouraged and may require AVP extension.

## Possible Outcomes

### 1. Satisfactory

The AVP candidate continues in the postgraduate training program. Once the AVP is completed the AVP certificate is not valid, and the candidate cannot continue training until

the CPSO has issued the Certificate of Registration authorizing postgraduate education.

**2. Unsatisfactory**

A candidate with an unsatisfactory assessment has his/her appointment with the University terminated.

**3. Withdrawal**

An AVP candidate may choose to withdraw from the AVP at any time. Withdrawal may have an impact on the terms of the Ministry of Health Return of Service (ROS) Agreement. Candidates should consult the Program Officer at the MOH regarding their ROS obligations.

**4. Other**

See information in the Policy regarding suspension/dismissal and appeals.

### Reapplication of Unsatisfactory/Withdrawn Candidates

1. A candidate in the PGY2 Advanced stream may request the Program Director for consideration at the PGY1 level. Re-Entry at this level is at the discretion of the Program Director and will require CPSO approval.
2. As an unsatisfactory AVP is not counted towards residency training, a candidate who has not completed an AVP (PGY1 or PGY2 level) may apply to the first iteration of CaRMS.
3. Restriction on the re-application of failures are:
  - i. Cannot apply to the same specialty at the same level of entry. Candidates may apply to a lower level of entry in the same specialty, if applicable (see (a) above).
  - ii. May apply to a different specialty.

In addition, the following policies apply to AVP candidates:

### PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

AVP candidates are expected to adhere to the standards of ethical behaviour for the medical profession and their professional activities are expected to be characterized by honesty, integrity, conscientiousness and reliability. Behaviour which violates these principles, and which affects the performance of professional activities is viewed as a demonstration of lack of suitability to be a physician.

Assessment of behavioural and ethical performance will be related to the following educational objectives:

- The AVP candidate must display adequate skill at communicating and interacting appropriately with patients, families, colleagues, and allied health care professionals.
- AVP candidates should demonstrate:
  - respect, empathy and compassion for patients and their families;
  - concern for the needs of the patients and their families to understand the nature of the illness and the goals and possible complications of investigations and treatment;
  - awareness of the effects that differences in cultural and social background have on the maintenance of health and the development of, and reaction to, illness;
  - respect for the patient as an informed participant in decisions regarding his/her care, wherever possible;
  - an understanding of the appropriate requirements for involvement of patients and

- their families in research;
- respect for, and ability to work harmoniously with other allied health care personnel and medical colleagues;
- a willingness to teach others in their own specialty, as well as other allied health care professionals;
- recognition of the importance of self-assessment and of lifelong learning for the maintenance of competent performance.

Behaviour unacceptable to the professional practice of medicine includes but is not limited to:

- breach of any of the above principles of behaviour;
- referring to oneself as, or holding oneself to be, more qualified than one is;
- behaviour or inappropriate judgement which adversely affects the medical education of others;
- commission of a criminal act;
- failure to be available while on call;
- failure to respect patients' rights;
- breach of confidentiality;
- failure to provide transfer of responsibility for patient care;
- failure to keep proper medical records;
- falsification of medical or other records;
- falsification of academic records, cheating, or other academic misconduct;
- sexual impropriety with a patient;
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs while participating in patient care or on call;
- sexual or other harassment of colleagues or other members of the health care team;
- conduct prohibited by professional governing bodies including the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
- disrupting the effective functioning of organizations or individuals within the health care system;
- inappropriate use of social media;
- any conduct unbecoming of a practicing physician.

AVP candidates are also required to comply with the professional standards mandated by the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (e.g. Charter on Medical/Dental Professionalism; Four Pillars of Professionalism; Policy and Guidelines for Interactions between Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Industry), as well as those issued by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and the Canadian Medical Association.

An AVP candidate's professional conduct is evaluated during the assessment verification period. In addition, any serious breaches of professional conduct will be reported immediately to the Program Director and Associate Dean Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) and may result in suspension and/or termination of a candidate's appointment with the University prior to the end of the assessment verification period.

#### **BREACHES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OR PATIENT CARE/SAFETY CONCERNS**

Serious allegations of unprofessional conduct against an AVP candidate and/or conduct that gives rise to concerns about patient care or safety should be brought to the attention of the Associate Dean PGME. The candidate may be suspended from clinical duties during the investigation of the allegations (see "Suspension")

## SUSPENSION

1. The Associate Dean PGME, or in his or her absence or unavailability the Program Director, may suspend a candidate at any time if there are concerns about patient care or safety or there are allegations of unprofessional conduct (see “Professional Conduct” above). A suspension by the Program Director in these circumstances must subsequently be confirmed by the Associate Dean PGME.
2. The Associate Dean PGME or Program Director will notify the candidate in writing that he or she is suspended or removed from specific clinical duties pending an investigation. At the request of the candidate, the Associate Dean PGME or Program Director shall meet with the candidate within 7 days of issuance of the notice to review the reasons for the decision and allow the candidate to respond. The candidate may be accompanied by a colleague or other support person. The Associate Dean PGME or Program Director shall then decide if the suspension or removal from specific clinical duties should continue pending completion of the investigation and shall inform the candidate in writing of his or her decision.
3. The PGME Office will advise hospital administration and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and CEHPEA of any suspension.

## APPEALS

AVP candidates may choose to appeal an unsatisfactory final assessment or suspension based on process issues only.

1. A candidate may appeal the following decisions to the Schulich Postgraduate Medical Education Appeal Committee (“the Committee”):
  - a) an unsatisfactory assessment at the end of the assessment verification period resulting in termination of a candidate’s appointment with the University;
  - b) a decision by the Associate Dean PGME to terminate a candidate’s appointment with the University because he or she has engaged in unprofessional conduct and/or has jeopardized patient care or safety.
2. A candidate may appeal on the following grounds:
  - a) for an appeal under section 1(a), that there was a significant error in the assessment verification process that could reasonably be seen to cast doubt on the correctness of the final assessment;
  - b) for an appeal under section 1(b), that the Associate Dean PGME did not take into consideration relevant information or that the decision cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean PGME.
3. An appeal must be submitted to the PGME Office within two weeks of the issuance of the decision and include the following:
  - a) a copy of relevant evaluations (if applicable)
  - b) a copy of the decision
  - c) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
  - d) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.
4. The PGME Office shall forward copies of the appeal documentation to the respondent (Program Director and/or Associate Dean PGME) who shall file a concise written reply with relevant documentation within two weeks of the filing of the appeal. A copy of the reply shall be provided to the candidate.

5. Where circumstances warrant, the deadlines for filing an appeal or response may be extended at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee.
6. The PGME Office shall forward the documentation provided by the candidate and respondent to the Committee.
7. The Committee shall determine its own procedures for hearing an appeal and the Chair of the Committee may make such rules and orders as he or she deems necessary and proper to ensure a fair and expeditious proceeding. The candidate shall be informed of the procedures that will be followed.

The Committee shall proceed fairly in its disposition of the appeal, ensuring that both the candidate and the respondent are aware of the evidence to be considered.

8. The Committee shall provide the parties to the appeal with an opportunity to meet with the Committee and bring witnesses. Both parties and their witnesses may be cross-examined by the other party and both parties may be represented by legal counsel.
9. The Committee shall issue a written decision with reasons and may:
  - a) deny the appeal;
  - b) grant the appeal of the assessment (section 1(a)) if it is persuaded that there was a significant error in the assessment verification period process that could reasonably be seen to cast doubt on the correctness of the final assessment and allow the candidate to repeat the AVP process or part of the process (subject to any required CPSO approval) and may provide recommendations to the program on the conduct of the process;
  - c) grant the appeal of the Associate Dean PGME's decision (section 1(b)) if it is persuaded that the Associate Dean PGME did not take into consideration relevant information when making the decision and remit the matter to the Associate Dean PGME for reconsideration; or
  - d) grant the appeal if it is persuaded that the Associate Dean PGME's decision (section 1(b)) cannot be supported on the information that was before the Associate Dean PGME and reinstate the candidate.
10. A decision to deny the appeal may be appealed to the Dean, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, on the grounds that there was a significant procedural error by the Schulich Postgraduate Medical Education Appeal Committee that was prejudicial to the candidate and casts doubt on the fairness of those proceedings. The Dean may delegate his or her authority to hear and decide the appeal to another individual or individuals or to a committee. References to "Dean" in this part mean "Dean or delegate".
11. An appeal must be submitted to the Dean's Office, Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, within two weeks of the issuance of the Committee's decision and include the following:
  - a) a copy of the Committee's decision;
  - b) the grounds of appeal and remedy sought, and
  - c) a full statement supporting the grounds of appeal and any relevant documentation.
12. The Dean's Office shall forward copies of the candidate's appeal documentation to the respondent (Program Director or Associate Dean PGME) who shall file a concise written reply with relevant documentation within two weeks of the filing of the appeal. A copy of the

reply shall be provided to the candidate.

13. Where circumstances warrant, the deadlines for filing an appeal or response may be extended at the discretion of the Dean.

14. The Dean shall base his or her decision solely on the written material filed by the parties.

The Dean shall issue a written decision with reason and may:

a) deny the appeal; or

b) grant the appeal and send the matter back to the Committee with specific directions for rehearing all or part of the appeal or make such other order as he or she deems appropriate.

**15. The Dean's decision is final and there is no further right of appeal at the University.**